Questions for Hills Like White Elephants:

1. Looking back on the story, list the evidence that tells what kind of operation Jig is confronting. How risky is it physically and emotionally?

2. Are you surprised that this story was written by a man? Why or why not?

3. Describe the setting.

4. How do the hills in the story spotlight Jig's decision? How does Jig see the setting as symbolic of her choices?

5. How does the fact that Jig sees the setting symbolically get us to identify with her more readily than if the author had suggested the symbolism to us directly? Note the symbolism of the two different landscapes on either side of the Zaragosa train station, plus the possible symbolism of the curtain, as suggested in the commentary beside the story.

6. Hemingway once suggested that his purpose in such a story is to tell the reader as little as possible directly yet to reveal characters' motives and their conflict. How does this principle operate in this story? Where would you like to have more information (besides "he said" and "she said")?

7. Lewis Weeks, Jr., claimed in 1980 that "although subject, setting, point of view, characterization, dialog, irony, and compression all make 'Hills Like White Elephants' one of Hemingway's most brilliant short stories, the symbolism implicit in the title and developed in the story contributes more than any other single quality to the powerful impact."  Agree with any part of this statement in detail, quoting relevant phrases from the story as needed.

8. Does Jig love the American? Does he love her? How do you know?

9. The following statement containing a quotation that appears in the story: *When the American tells her that they can have whatever they want—“We can have the whole world”—Jig says, “It isn’t ours any more . . . And once they take it away, you never get it back.”* Comment on what Jig means when she says that "once they take it away, you never get it back.”